

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

RICHARD J. ROSS
REPRESENTATIVE
9TH NORFOLK DISTRICT



Committees:
Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure
Education
Mental Health & Substance Abuse
Personnel & Administration
Revenue

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August 24, 2006

Alicia Matthews
Director, Cable Television Division
Department of Telecommunications and Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Ms. Matthews:

I am writing regarding the recent petition filed by Verizon New England, Inc. with Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE), through the Cable Television Division. Along with the towns of Wrentham, Norfolk and the other communities that I represent, I oppose this effort and its unreasonable restraints on municipalities.

In its petition, Verizon proposes new rules of cable television licensure. Instead of the traditional time frame, Verizon suggests capping the time limit at 90 days for a municipality to issue a license should the application be approved. This requires a public hearing within 60 days of filing the application and a mere 30 days after the hearing to approve or disapprove the application and file the license in case of approval.

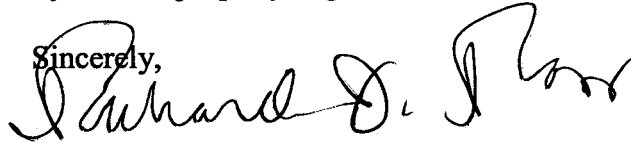
Because of the complex web of issues raised by any cable licensure, the time frame of 30 days does not provide enough time for local officials to properly evaluate the application and issue an approval or denial. The additional matters of application review, negotiation, license drafting, and issuance can also take longer than 30 days to complete.

The current timeframe for cable licensing is reasonable and has worked well for decades, as the case of RCN demonstrates. This timeframe allows for a thorough evaluation of every application and an educated decision on whether to approve or deny licensure.

Changing the licensing rules set forth in the 1984 Cable Act for a single provider would set a dangerous precedent for future companies to follow suit.

The bottom line is that the existing municipal approach to competitive licensing works. If any cable company wants to offer its services to a town in the Commonwealth, a process already exists for it to do so. Verizon's proposal would unfairly box municipalities into a 30-day timeframe for reviewing and negotiating proposals. This is simply not reasonable for a fair licensing process. I urge you to reject Verizon's proposal and allow municipalities the time they need to properly negotiate contracts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard J. Ross".

RICHARD J. ROSS
State Representative

RJR/km